



March - April 2024
Newsletter

Shenandoah Valley Watercolor Society
P. O. Box 2744
Harrisonburg VA 22801
ShenandoahValleyWatercolorSociety.org

Officers:

Barbara Gautcher

BGautcher@gmail.com

Lois Kauffman

LRKauffman111@gmail.com

Kevin Updike

Kevin7Updike@gmail.com

Donna Detrich, Treasurer

DonnaDetrich@gmail.com

Wanna Be Inspired? Get Busy!

I read the quote from Chuck Close which ends this newsletter and was reminded of Pablo Picasso, his life, and the absolutely creative expression of his life in his art work. Picasso painted like an Italian Renaissance painter at age 14 and then began exploring other ways to express himself. He was relentless in producing creative work; through drawings, paintings, printmaking, pottery, sculpture, and experimental works. Picasso's "style" moved back and forth between realism and abstraction, Cubism and Neoclassicism, Surrealism and Expressionism.

Whether we like or even understand his work, Picasso was a creative dynamo. He lived until he was 92, creating thousands of works of art, making him the most influential artist of the first half of the 20th Century. He helped pioneer Cubism, invented Collage, and made a major contribution to Surrealism. By his own example and through his words, Picasso tells us "**Inspiration exists, but it must find us working.**" Let's spend time working on our art every day. Great things will emerge!

Barbara Gautcher

Merriam-Webster Definition of Inspire: To exert an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on. Merriam-Webster Dictionary says *inspire* came into use in the 14th century and carries the same meaning today - To influence, move, or guide by divine or supernatural influence. To draw forth or bring out. From the Greek, to "breathe or blow into," or the breath of a divine force at work, or to infuse something with life.

And isn't that what we strive to do? To bring life to a piece of paper, with water, a brush, and paint? Mindy

Lourene Bender: Our Featured Artist

By Mindy Morrison



Watercolor Collage by Lourene Bender

Thirty plus years ago, Lourene Bender, then a self-employed massage therapist in Harrisonburg, decided to try a new hobby. Since she didn't know how to draw, she signed up for a watercolor class taught by Nancy Stark, a local artist of renown, and Lourene's life changed. When the class ended, she not only had a burning passion but a new circle of friends. The "Art Girls," as Lourene tags the group, continued meeting together every week to paint. Through the years, they attended classes and workshops, and joined SVWS. They travelled to Cheap Joe's weekend workshops in Boone, NC, and other classes. Their skills were honed as they inspired each other to try new ideas. Our Friday Paint Party, open to all SVWS members, is their offspring.

Several years ago, Lourene took a Watercolor Collage workshop, propelling her into a new abstract expression. From a distance, a "Lourene Bender" painting is easy to spot. Her landscapes are like no other, and they sell at shows and exhibits. Judges award her creativity with ribbons.

Bender often uses personal photographs taken locally to inspire her landscape collages. She paints tissue paper with vivid turquoise, deep magenta, soft pinks, brilliant reds and greens, and lets them dry. After cutting or tearing the paper, she will place an interesting shape on watercolor paper, then a few more, and frees her imagination. Does she see a forest, a river, or mountain in moonlight? Perhaps a branch floating in a stream, or a creature? She reaches for a tub of Yes Paste for scrapbooking and collage, applying it to the tissue with a moist brush. She may wad up Saran Wrap, dab it for texture, allowing

it to dry. As she sees an idea form, she may pull other torn pieces from her stash to see what works.

“Oh, I like that!” and she’s on her way. When the original Art Women gather, Lourene asks for critiques, and they freely offer suggestions and encouragement. Another prize or sale is waiting to be launched.

The students of Nancy Stark, all now true artists, receive regular acclaim for their paintings, inspired by working at their craft, week after year after decade. They are still there for each other and now, for the rest of us, every Friday morning from 10-12. And for 84-year-old Lourene, that fiery passion to create still burns hot. Working at her dining table, she strives for, “Oh, I like that.”

And honestly, isn’t that moment what we all strive for?



Watercolor Collage by Lourene Bender

Member News

Three New SVWS Signature Members include Mia Ackerson, Kelly Prim, and Mindy Morrison. Congratulations! And thank you to those who served on the jury. The next Signature Member jury process is scheduled for late summer. If you are interested in applying for Signature Membership, check your SVWS folder for more information.

SVWS Dues of \$35 if you have not yet paid. Student dues are \$15. Donna Detrich will gladly accept your payment. Checks payable to SVWS. You may also mail your payment to her at her new address:

3450 Lairds Knob Drive
Keezletown, VA 22832

Peg Sheridan, a master in painting lush, rainy scenes, offered a class last month on this subject. Her next class is “Painting Nature in Watercolor.” On Tuesdays, beginning March 19, it will be held at the Shenandoah Valley Art Center in Waynesboro. More information is available on her website. Check out www.pegsheridan.com Her classes fill quickly!

Peg also offers mentoring if you seriously want to take your art to a higher level. Want one-on-one instruction and critiques? Again, check her website or email her at PSheridan99@comcast.net

Bahir Al Badry taught an Etching class through the Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation program. Bahir, who has a studio above OASIS, is a top-seller for the art store and certainly helps to boost SVWS coffers. If you haven’t been to OASIS for a while, stop by and check all the art offered by SVWS Signature Members. Bahir would be happy to talk to you about his art.

OASIS Volunteers: Please consider volunteering at OASIS a couple of times each month. Rob Kloetzer volunteered to help yet more assistance is needed.

SVWS Treasurer We need a Treasurer. Please consider!

Social Media Report from Lynda Chandler

Fourteen new member inquiries were answered in 2023, and four became members. SVWS has received two inquiries as of February 17.

We will have an Instagram site linked to our Facebook page. The benefits of an Instagram account are that it is used by a younger group of viewers in their 30s and 40s. We need to draw new younger members.

ShenandoahValleyWatercolorSociety.org continues to add to the Gallery page. Send Lynda a painting image of yours to add to the Gallery. Check out the website and let her know if there is a misprint. Our website receives on average 2 new member inquiries per month.

Upcoming Events & Exhibits

March 2: SVWS monthly meetings are always the first Saturday of every month from 10 – 12 at 700 West Market Street in Harrisonburg. At this meeting, we will paint together. **Bring your palette, watercolor paper, 1-2 round brushes for a demo on adding figures to your paintings.**

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: 10 am ‘til noon, Paint Party every Friday, Westover Park’s Price-Rotary Senior Center in Harrisonburg. Bring your paint and current project. We paint together and help each other. In case of poor weather, if Harrisonburg schools are closed, we will not gather. Drop 2-4 dollars in the bag to offset the cost of room rental to SVWS.

March 2: 10 ‘til noon SVWS monthly meeting.

April 5, 12, 19, 26: 10 ‘til noon. Paint Party at Westover Park’s Price-Rotary Senior Center in Harrisonburg

April 6: 10 – 12 SVWS monthly meeting at our usual meeting place.

May: Oasis show theme “Summer Fun.” Signature Members may participate.

June 3, Our Next Gallery Day: SVWS Signature Members are invited to show and sell their work at three locations in Harrisonburg. Paintings are changed every three months on the first Monday following our regular monthly meetings.

- Taste of Thai restaurant, 917 S. High St. - Contact Lois Whitecotton
- The Rocktown Gift Shoppe inside the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center, 212 South Main St. - Contact Lorraine Davis. Mia Ackerson, and Janina Greene volunteered to assist.
- OASIS Fine Art and Craft, 103 S. Main St. Contact Donna Detrich

August: Muse Winery Exhibition in Woodstock

September through October: SVWS Member Show at VMRC. Submit your three best paintings.

Brushstrokes

Janina Greene sold a painting.

There are surely other sales and good news to announce. If you sell a painting, receive an honor or award, or are teaching a class, email Mindy Morrison at MJDM@comcast.net It will go into our May-June Newsletter.

News for the SVWS May - June newsletter? Send it to me, Mindy Morrison, at MJDM@comcast.net. Please specify in the Subject line it is for that edition.

This bimonthly newsletter's color theme is Lilac, a signature color for March and Spring, plus Gold, a complement of lilac. Thank you to my editors, Barbara Gautcher and JanetLee Wright, for polishing the newsletter.



Watercolor Collage by Lourene Bender

“The advice I like to give young artists, or really anybody who’ll listen to me, is not to wait around for inspiration. Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work. If you wait around for the clouds to part and a bolt of lightning to strike you in the brain, you are not going to do an awful lot of work. All the best ideas come out of the process; they come out of the work itself. Things occur to you. If you’re sitting around trying to dream up a great idea, you can sit there a long time before anything happens. But if you just get to work, something will occur to you and something else will occur to you and something else that you reject will push you in another direction. Inspiration is absolutely unnecessary and somehow deceptive. You feel like you need this great idea before you can get down to work, and I find that’s almost never the case.”

*Painter and visual artist Chuck Close on inspiration
Stolen from James Clear’s 3-2-1 Feb. 15, 2024 Newsletter*